

What is claimed is:

1. The method of gathering and storing a database containing selected content extracted from inbound Internet messages sent to a server from a client via the Internet, and from outbound Internet messages sent from said server to a client, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a gateway interposed in the communications pathway between said server and said client and utilizing said gateway to perform the steps of:

receiving each of said inbound messages from a client and forwarding said inbound messages to said server,

extracting a first selected set of data contained in predetermined ones of said inbound messages and storing said first set of data in a database,

receiving each of said outbound messages from said server and forwarding each such outbound message to a client,

extracting a second selected set of data contained in predetermined ones of said outbound messages and storing said second set of data in said database,

whereby said database is populated with information which describes the past use of said server.

2. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said database is a relational database system which stores said first and second selected sets of data in addressable storage locations defined by a database schema.

3. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of receiving and forwarding each of said inbound messages is performed before or concurrently with said step of extracting data contained in predetermined ones of said inbound messages.

4. The method set forth in claim 3 wherein said step of receiving and forwarding each of said outbound messages is performed before or concurrently with said step of extracting data contained in predetermined ones of said outbound messages.

5. The method set forth in claim 1 further including the step of accepting configuration data which identifies said first and said second sets of data.

6. The method set forth in claim 2 further including the step of accepting configuration

data which identifies said first and said second sets of data and corresponding addressable storage locations defined by said database schema for storing said first and said second sets of data.

7. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of receiving each of said inbound messages from a client and forwarding said inbound messages to said server includes the step forwarding selected ones of said inbound messages to a second server, and wherein the step of receiving outbound messages from said server includes the step of receiving outbound messages from said second server.

8. The method set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of receiving each of said outbound messages from said server and forwarding each such outbound message to a client includes the step of inserting client identification data into said outbound message before said outbound message is forwarded to said client.

9. The method set forth in claim 8 further including the step of accepting cookie configuration data from a user, and wherein said step of inserting client information into said outgoing method is performed only on selected messages identified by said cookie configuration data.

10. Apparatus for gathering and storing selected content data extracted from inbound Internet request messages sent to a server from a client via the Internet and for gathering additional selected content data from outbound Internet response messages sent from said server to said client, said apparatus comprising:

an Internet communications pathway for transferring said inbound Internet request messages and said outbound Internet response messages between said client and said server,
a database, and

a gateway device connected in said Internet communications pathway, said gateway comprising:

means for receiving each of said inbound messages from said client and forwarding said inbound messages to said server

means for extracting a first selected set of data contained in predetermined ones of said inbound messages and storing said first set of data in a database,

receiving each of said outbound messages from said server and forwarding each such outbound message to a client, and

extracting a second selected set of data contained in predetermined ones of said outbound messages and storing said second set of data in said database,

whereby said database is populated with information which describes the past use of said server.

11. Apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein said database is a relational database system which stores said first and second selected sets of data in addressable storage locations defined by a database schema.

12. Apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein means for receiving and forwarding each of said inbound messages operates before or concurrently with the means for extracting data from predetermined ones of said inbound messages.

13. Apparatus as set forth in claim 12 wherein said means for receiving and forwarding each of said outbound messages operates before or concurrently with said means for extracting data contained in predetermined ones of said outbound messages.

14. Apparatus set forth in claim 10 further including means for accepting configuration data which identifies said first and said second sets of data.

15. The method set forth in claim 11 further including means for accepting configuration data which identifies said first and said second sets of data and further identifying corresponding addressable storage locations defined by said database schema for storing said first and said second sets of data.

16. Apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein said means for receiving each of said inbound messages from a client and forwarding said inbound messages to said server includes means for forwarding selected ones of said inbound messages to a second server, and wherein the means for receiving outbound messages from said server includes means for also receiving outbound messages from said second server.

17. Apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein said means for receiving each of said outbound messages from said server and forwarding each such outbound message to a client includes means for inserting client identification data into said outbound message before said outbound message is forwarded to said client.

18. Apparatus as set forth in claim 17 further including means for accepting cookie configuration data from a user, and wherein said means for inserting client information

into said outgoing method operates only on selected messages identified by said cookie configuration data.

continued